

No matter how frustrated a cranky baby makes you feel, shaking him or her is never the answer. Doing so can damage a fragile brain, leading to Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS), a cause of serious injury or death for children under two. This condition is also known as Abusive Head Trauma [AHT].

Between two weeks and three months old, an infant may cry for long periods, especially in the afternoon or evening. This may occur despite best efforts to provide soothing care. Experts call this the "period of purple crying," which may last from 45 minutes to a few hours. This heavy crying is natural and will come and go no matter what parents do.

Reacting in anger and handling a baby roughly can result in SBS symptoms such as vomiting for no reason, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head and seizures. Long term consequences may include learning disabilities and behavior disorders.

Learning about SBS [or AHT] and the importance of **never shaking infants** are the first steps toward protecting them. Help promote awareness by sharing information and observing **Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Week**, which is the third week in April.

*NEVER SHAKE A BABY!

When A Baby Constantly Cries...

Infants and toddlers are unable to control their emotions because they are immature and helpless. Remember this when you care for a fussy infant who won't stop crying and you feel your frustration level rising.

When adults lose control, babies are harmed. Children under the age of 12 months accounted for 84 percent of the Shaken Baby Syndrome hospitalizations in Virginia.

The good news is you can learn how to calm your baby and yourself.



Consider these options to avoid shaking or mishandling a baby:

- **>>>** Rule out sickness by calling your pediatrician if the baby has been crying for several hours.
- **>>>** Gently swing or rock the baby.
- **>>>** Take the baby for a walk in the stroller or a ride in the car.

Here are ways to keep your cool:

- >>> Ask for help from a caring relative or friend. A break may make a difference.
- *** Avoid misdirecting your anger toward the baby. Call 800-CHILDREN (800-244-5373) for more information on ways to calm a crying baby.
- Walk away from the crying baby.

 Let the infant cry in his or her crib

 for a short period of time while you

 calm down.

>>>>>> DON'T SHAKE THE BABY!